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Medicine Buddha Sutra 藥師經

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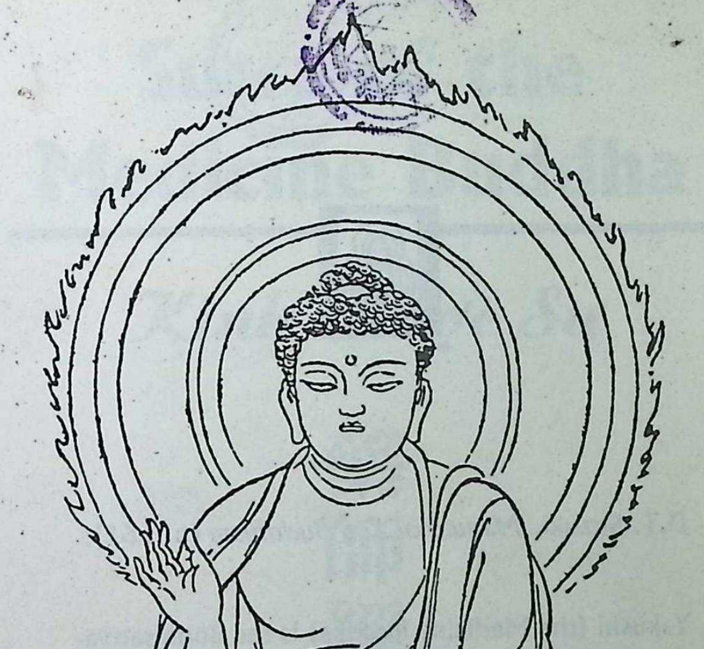

Bhaishajyaguru (Yakushi Nyorai)

D.T. Suzuki, *Manual of Zen Buddhism* (p. 161):

Yakushi (the Medicine Buddha) is the Bodhisattva-doctor. He holds a medicine jar in his hand and is attended by twelve gods each of whom represents one of his twelve vows. The main object of his appearance among us is to cure us of ignorance, which is the most fundamental of all the ills the flesh is heir to.

Acc. 649/6889

Sutra of the Medicine Buddha

Kinh Dược Sư

藥
師
經

Taisho XIV, 450

Translated and annotated under the guidance of
Dharma Master Hsuan Jung
By Minh Thành & P.D.Leigh

International Buddhist Monastic Institute
2001

The *Sutra of the Medicine Buddha* is among the most popular texts in East Asia, along with the *Amitabha*, the *Ksitigarbha* and the *Lotus* sutras. This new translation, freely available to all seekers, includes the oral comments of several contemporary senior monks.

2001
Second edition

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Stamped Buddha images,
above the ceiling of an ancient temple.
Amitabha Buddha (first row)
Medicine Buddha (second & third rows)
Japan, ca. 13th c.

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दौ.द. ४०३

गुल्मी, धानपाति-२ निवासी वेदराज ज्ञवालीद्वारा
वाल्मीकि विद्यापीठ पुस्तकालयलाई
उपहार स्वरूप प्रदान ! वेदराज ज्ञवाली
२०६२।११।२८

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Finally, we acknowledge our debt to the late Upasika Nguyen Thi Hoang /Dieu Phung, our first Dharma teacher, and the ebullient executor of her estate, Upasika Lien Smith, along with her husband, Prof. Forrest G. Smith, for support in the completion of this book. mt / pdl

Note to the English Edition

The present work is part of a multilingual series of Pure Land and Pure Land-related texts prepared since 1991 by the Van Hien Study Group, in cooperation with the Sutra Translation Committee of the United States and Canada and the International Buddhist Monastic Institute (USA).

This new translation is of a Pure Land-related text, the *Sutra of the Medicine Buddha.* It has benefiitted from six previous renderings in both Sino-Vietnamese and English and incorporates oral explanations and comments provided by several contemporary senior Masters . Explanatory notes and a glossary are included for the benefit of readers.

***

In the Mahayana tradition of East Asia, particularly China, Japan, Vietnam and Tibet, Bhaishajya-guru, the Medicine Buddha, (*Yao-shih Fo, Yakushi, Dược Sư Phật, Sangye Menla*), occupies a special place in the hearts of the devout. Specializing in curing disease, both physical and mental – of which delusion is the root cause – the Medicine Buddha is also the Buddha of wisdom. His healing acts are but the prelude to Supreme Enlightenment for those seekers who have the good fortune to learn of his vows or merely to hear his name!

Toward this ultimate goal, the sutra contains a passage describing the steps taken by the Medicine Buddha to help "monks, nuns, upasakas, upasikas, laymen and laywomen" who seek rebirth in Sukhavati, the Pure Land of Amitabha Buddha in the West.

A key element of the sutra is its emphasis on the assistance of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and its corollary of singleminded, enlightened faith. This is the crux of the sutra, the source of the efficacy of the Buddhas' and Bodhisattvas' vows. *If you are utterly sincere, if you do not harbor a single doubt*, you are fully concentrated – you are in samadhi. Your mind is then in tune with the mind of the Buddhas; a process of *spiritual osmosis* occurs whereby their merits and virtues become your own. How can your wishes and hopes then not become reality? [1]

May all sentient beings live in peace, ultimately attaining Supreme Enlightenment under the benevolent light of the Medicine Buddha – *in this world* – and the compassionate light of Amitabha Buddha – *in the worlds beyond*![2]

Van Hien Study Group
Bhaisajya-guru Festival
Nov. 2000

बौद्ध.ग्र.-४०३

Introduction

In the vast Mahayana pantheon, three Buddhas stand supreme: *Sakyamuni*, the Buddha of the present age; *Amitabha*, the Lord of Sukhavati, the Western Pure Land; and the *Medicine Buddha*, the "Healing Buddha", the "Doctor of Body and Soul". As embodiments of the archetypical "healer" watching over the living and "consoler" watching over those long gone, the Medicine Buddha and Amitabha Buddha represent teachings common to all traditions of Buddhism.[3]

1. Bhaisajya guru – the Medicine Buddha

In East Asian temples, the Medicine Buddha is usually represented seated as part of a massive trinity with Sakyamuni (in the center) and Amitabha (on Sakyamuni's right). His right hand is raised, forming the Varada mudra, the hand-and-fingers gesture symbolizing offering, giving, compassion. The left hand usually rests on his lap, holding a jar of medicine (or sometimes a healing fruit or stupa). The medicine jar, painted dark blue (the color of the gemstone lapis lazuli), is the distinguishing feature of this Buddha, although it may be missing from some statues.[4]

The Medicine Buddha should be distinguished from Aksobya Buddha (whose Pure Land is also in the East)[5] and from the Medicine King *Bodhisattva* (referred to in the *Lotus Sutra*).

2. The Sutra of the Medicine Buddha

There are currently five extant Chinese translations from the Sanskrit, done between AD 317 and AD 707, as well as two Tibetan translations. The text that forms the basis of this translation is that of the Patriarch Hsuan-tsang, founder of the Chinese Yogacara (Mind-Only) school and translator of some 75 Buddhist sutras. Completed in AD 650, it is considered the most complete and authoritative version of the sutra.

The sutra is composed essentially of three parts, the first describing the Twelve Great Vows of the Medicine Buddha and the second, his extensive merits as well as the various ways he comes to the aid of those beset by sufferings and calamities. The third part sets forth the vows of the twelve Yaksa Generals to benefit sentient beings.

The sutra is influential throughout East Asia, as it combines the Pure Land teachings on rebirth and the esoteric practices of reciting dharani and lighting lamps with the promise of *practical benefits* in everyday life. This promise (of protection against disease and other personal misfortunes) is the single most attractive feature of the sutra.

3. Teachings of the sutra

The sutra emphasizes faith in the assistance of the Medicine Buddha, while not neglecting *self-power*, the cultivation of the devout.

> The Buddha then said to Ananda: "If sentient beings [beset by heavy karma] should hear the name of the Medicine Buddha Lapis Lazuli Radiance Tathagata, singlemindedly recite and hold fast to it without harboring a single doubt, then it will be impossible for them to sink into the Evil Realms.
>
> "O, Ananda! These sublime practices of the Buddhas are difficult to believe in, difficult to understand. Yet you are now able to uphold them. You should realize that this is due to the awesome power of the Tathagatas."

However, the question remains as to how reciting the name and making offerings to the Medicine Buddha can ward off disease and calamity, bringing peace and joy to the sick and suffering. In this context, the teachings on the transference of merit and on Mind-Only come into focus.

a) Mind-Only

All karma, good or bad, is created from the mind. If through visualizing the Medicine Buddha or reciting his name, a person's mind changes from greed, anger and delusion to selflessness, compassion and wisdom, a change in his negative pattern of thinking is realized and his negative karma changes for the good. "The drifting life is cast aside for one of spiritual dedication" (John Blofeld). With the removal of greed, anger and delusion, most other illnesses, however physical their symptoms, are also eventually cured.

b) Transference of merit

> Some of us may ask whether the effect of evil karma can be ... changed by repeating the name of Kuan-Yin (Avalokitesvara). This question is tied up with that of rebirth in Sukhavati (the Pure Land) and it may be answered by saying that the invocation of Kuan-Yin's name forms another cause which will right away offset the previous karma. We know, for example, that if there is a dark, heavy cloud above, the chances are that it will rain. But we also know that if a strong wind should blow, the cloud will be carried away somewhere else and we will not feel the rain. Similarly, the addition of one big factor can alter the whole course of karma ... It is only by accepting the idea of life as one whole that both Theravadins and Mahayanists can advocate the practice of transference of merit to others. With the case of Kuan-Yin then, by calling on Her name we identify ourselves with Her and as a result of this identification, Her merits flow over to us. These merits which are now ours then counterbalance our bad karma and save us from calamity. The Law of Cause and Effect still stands good. All that has happened is that a powerful and immensely good karma has overshadowed the weaker one. (Lecture on Kuan-Yin by Tech Eng Soon - Penang Buddhist Association, c. 1960. Pamphlet.)

c) Efficacy of the Vows

The key to the sutra's efficacy lies in the complete absence of doubt on the part of the practitioner. If he is utterly sincere, he is in a *de facto* state of samadhi – the very state of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. His mind is then the mind of the Buddhas --

their merits and virtues become his own. How then can disease or calamity defeat him?

***

In the end, the teaching of the *Sutra of the Medicine Buddha* is one of life and hope, infinite trust and boundless compassion – in other words, a teaching of the heart.

> What is told is just what the wonder images in the temples tell. Somebody arrived, infinite years ago, who promised release from misery, salvation. Trust in this promise, hold fast to the name of this Buddha ... If a man once heard His name, a new hope has come into his life – this hope is his treasure, he must not squander it. (W. Liebenthal)

And squander it he must not, because this hope leads to nothing less than eventual Enlightenment and Buddhahood.[6]

mt/pd

Faith is the basis of the path, the mother of virtues,
Nourishing and growing all good ways ...
Faith can increase knowledge and virtue;
Faith can assure arrival at Enlightenment.
(*Avatamsaka Sutra*)

Sutra of the Medicine Buddha

藥師琉璃光如來本願功德經

唐三藏法師玄奘奉　詔譯

如是我聞。一時薄伽梵、遊化諸國。至廣嚴城。住樂音樹下。與大苾芻衆八千人俱。菩薩摩訶薩三萬六千、及國王大臣、婆羅門居士、天龍八部、人非人等、無量大衆。恭敬圍繞。而爲說法。

爾時曼殊室利法王子、承佛威神。從座而

गुल्मी, थानपति-२ निवासी वेदराज ज्ञवालीद्वारा
वाल्मीकि विद्यापीठ पुस्तकालयलाई
उपहार स्वरूप ......प्रदान।
२०६२।११।२४

Sutra of the Medicine Buddha Lapis Lazuli Radiance Tathagata: His Past Vows, Merits and Virtues

(Translated from Sanskrit into Chinese by the
T'ang dynasty Tripitaka Master Hsuan-tsang)
[Translated into English by Minh Thanh & P.D. Leigh (2001)]

Thus have I heard: Once Buddha Sakyamuni, the World-Honored One, was traveling throughout the various lands to teach and convert the people. When he arrived in Vaisali, he rested under the Tree of Music, accompanied by 8,000 great Bhiksus. An immeasurably great Assembly, including 36,000 great Bodhisattvas as well as kings, great ministers, Brahmins, laymen and women, the Eight Types of Divinities and other human and non-human beings, gathered respectfully around the Buddha as He preached the Dharma.

At that time, the Bodhisattva Manjusri, Prince of the Dharma, receiving the awesome spiritual power of the Buddha, rose from his seat, adjusted his

起。偏袒一肩。右膝著地。向薄伽梵。曲躬合掌、白言。世尊。惟願演說如是相類諸佛名號、及本大願殊勝功德。令諸聞者、業障消除。爲欲利樂像法轉時、諸有情故。

爾時世尊讚曼殊室利童子言。善哉善哉。曼殊室利。汝以大悲、勸請我說諸佛名號、本願功德。爲拔業障所纏有情。利益安樂像法轉時、諸有情故。汝今諦聽。極善思惟。

robe to bare his shoulder and knelt on his right knee. He bowed deeply, and with palms joined, respectfully addressed the Buddha: "World-Honored One, may I please request you to explain the various names and titles, the great, past vows and the superlative virtues of the Buddhas, so that those who are listening to you will be freed of karmic obstructions, while in the future, sentient beings in the Dharma Semblance Age will also derive great benefit and joy."

The Buddha praised the Bodhisattva Manjusri, saying:

"Excellent! Excellent, Manjusri! Out of great compassion, you have urged me to explain the names and titles,[7] merits and virtues and past vows of the Buddhas, in order to liberate those who are bound by karmic obstructions and bring benefits, peace and joy to all sentient beings in the Dharma Semblance Age. Now, listen attentively and reflect very carefully upon what I am about to say."

當爲汝說。曼殊室利言．唯然、願說．我等樂聞．

佛告曼殊室利．東方去此過十殑伽沙等佛土．有世界名淨琉璃．佛號藥師琉璃光、如來、應正等覺、明行圓滿、善逝、世間解、無上士、調御丈夫天人師、佛、薄伽梵。曼殊室利．彼世尊藥師琉璃光如來、本行菩薩道時．發十二大願。令諸有情、所求皆得。

The Bodhisattva Manjusri replied: "So be it, World-Honored One. We will joyfully listen to whatever you wish to teach."

***

The Buddha then said to the Bodhisattva Manjusri:

"East of this world, past countless Buddha-lands -- more numerous than the grains of sand in ten Ganges Rivers -- there exists a world called Pure Lapis Lazuli. The Buddha of that world is called the Medicine Buddha Lapis Lazuli Radiance Tathagata, Arhat, the Perfectly Enlightened, Perfect in Mind and Deed, Well Gone, Knower of the World, Unsurpassed Being, Tamer of Passions, Teacher of Gods and Men, Buddha-World-Honored One.

"Manjusri, when the World-Honored Medicine Buddha was treading the Bodhisattva path, he solemnly made Twelve Great Vows to grant sentient beings whatever they desired."

第一大願．願我來世、得阿耨多羅三藐三菩提時．自身光明熾然照耀無量無數無邊世界。以三十二大丈夫相、八十隨形、莊嚴其身。令一切有情、如我無異。

第二大願．願我來世得菩提時．身如琉璃．內外明徹．淨無瑕穢．光明廣大．功德巍巍．身善安住。燄網莊嚴、過於日月．幽冥眾生、悉蒙開曉。隨意所趣．作諸事業。

***

First Great Vow

"I vow that in a future life, when I have attained Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment, brilliant rays will shine forth from my body, illuminating infinite, countless boundless realms. This body will be adorned with the Thirty-Two Marks of Greatness and Eighty Auspicious Characteristics. Furthermore, I will enable all sentient beings to become just like me.

Second Great Vow

"I vow that in a future life, when I have attained Supreme Enlightenment, my body, inside and out, will radiate far and wide the clarity and flawless purity of lapis lazuli. This body will be adorned with superlative virtues and dwell peacefully in the midst of a web of light more magnificent than the sun or moon. The light will awaken the minds of all beings dwelling in darkness, enabling them to engage in their pursuits according to their wishes.

第三大願．願我來世得菩提時．以無量無邊智慧方便．令諸有情、皆得無盡所受用物．莫令衆生有所乏少。

第四大願．願我來世得菩提時．若諸有情、行邪道者．悉令安住菩提道中。若行聲聞獨覺乘者．皆以大乘而安立之。

第五大願．願我來世得菩提時．若有無量無邊有情．於我法中、修行梵行．一切皆令

Third Great Vow

"I vow that in a future life, when I have attained Supreme Enlightenment, I will, with infinite wisdom and skillful means, provide all sentient beings with an inexhaustible quantity of goods to meet their material needs. They will never want for anything.

Fourth Great Vow

"I vow that in a future life, when I have attained Supreme Enlightenment, I will set all who follow heretical ways upon the path to Enlightenment. Likewise, I will set those who follow the Sravaka and Pratyeka-Buddha ways onto the Mahayana path.

Fifth Great Vow

"I vow that in a future life, when I have attained Supreme Enlightenment, I will help all the countless sentient beings who cultivate the path of morality in accordance with my Dharma to observe the rules of

得不缺戒．具三聚戒。設有毀犯．聞我名已．
還得清淨．不墮惡趣。
第六大願．願我來世得菩提時．若諸有情、
其身下劣．諸根不具．醜陋頑愚．盲聾瘖瘂．
攣躄背僂．白癩顛狂．種種病苦。聞我名已．
一切皆得端正黠慧．諸根完具．無諸疾苦。
第七大願．願我來世得菩提時．若諸有情、
衆病逼切．無救無歸．無醫無藥．無親無家．

conduct (Precepts) to perfection, in conformity with the Three Root Precepts. Even those guilty of disparaging or violating the Precepts will regain their purity upon hearing my name, and avoid descending upon the Evil Paths.

Sixth Great Vow

"I vow that in a future life, when I have attained Supreme Enlightenment, sentient beings with imperfect bodies – whose senses are deficient, who are ugly, stupid, blind, deaf, mute, crippled, hunchbacked, leprous, insane or suffering from various other illnesses – will, upon hearing my name, acquire well-formed bodies, endowed with intelligence, with all senses intact. They will be free of illness and suffering.

Seventh Great Vow

"I vow that in a future life, when I have attained Supreme Enlightenment, sentient beings afflicted with various illnesses, with no one to help them, nowhere to turn, no physicians, no medicine, no

貧窮多苦。我之名號．一經其耳．衆病悉除．身心安樂．家屬資具悉皆豐足．乃至證得無上菩提。

第八大願．願我來世得菩提時．若有女人、爲女百惡之所逼惱極生厭離．願捨女身．聞我名已．一切皆得轉女成男具丈夫相．乃至證得無上菩提。

第九大願．願我來世得菩提時．令諸有情、

family, no home -- who are destitute and miserable -- will, as soon as my name passes through their ears, be relieved of all their illnesses. With mind and body peaceful and contented, they will enjoy home, family and property in abundance and eventually realize Unsurpassed Supreme Enlightenment.

Eighth Great Vow

"I vow that in a future life, when I have attained Supreme Enlightenment, those women who are extremely disgusted with the 'hundred afflictions that befall women' and wish to abandon their female form, will, upon hearing my name, all be reborn as men. They will be endowed with noble features and eventually realize Unsurpassed Supreme Enlightenment.

Ninth Great Vow

"I vow that in a future life, when I have attained Supreme Enlightenment, I will help all sentient beings

出魔罥網．解脫一切外道纏縛．若墮種種惡見稠林．皆當引攝置於正見．漸令修習諸菩薩行．速證無上正等菩提．

第十大願．願我來世得菩提時．若諸有情、王法所錄．繩縛鞭撻．繫閉牢獄．或當刑戮．及餘無量災難陵辱．悲愁煎逼．身心受苦．若聞我名．以我福德威神力故．皆得解脫一切憂苦。

escape from the demons' net and free themselves from the bonds of heretical paths.

"Should they be caught in the thicket of wrong views, I will lead them to correct views, gradually inducing them to cultivate the practices of Bodhisattvas and swiftly realize Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment.

Tenth Great Vow

"I vow that in a future life, when I have attained Supreme Enlightenment, those sentient beings who are shackled, beaten, imprisoned, condemned to death or otherwise subjected to countless miseries and humiliations by royal decree -- and who are suffering in body and mind from this oppression -- need only hear my name to be freed from all these afflictions, thanks to the awesome power of my merits and virtues.

第十一大願．願我來世得菩提時．若諸有情、饑渴所惱．爲求食故。造諸惡業。得聞我名．專念受持．我當先以上妙飲食、飽足其身．後以法味畢竟安樂而建立之。

第十二大願．願我來世得菩提時．若諸有情、貧無衣服．蚊蝱寒熱．晝夜逼惱。若聞我名．專念受持。如其所好．即得種種上妙衣服．亦得一切寶莊嚴具．華鬘塗香．鼓樂眾

Eleventh Great Vow

"I vow that in a future life, when I have attained Supreme Enlightenment, if sentient beings who are tormented by hunger and thirst -- to the point of creating evil karma in their attempts to survive -- should succeed in hearing my name, recite it singlemindedly and hold fast to it, I will first satisfy them with the most exquisite food and drink. Ultimately, it is through the flavor of the Dharma that I will establish them in the realm of peace and happiness.

Twelfth Great Vow

"I vow that in a future life, when I have attained Supreme Enlightenment, if sentient beings who are utterly destitute, lacking clothes to protect them from mosquitos and flies, heat and cold -- and are suffering day and night -- should hear my name, recite it singlemindedly and hold fast to it, their wishes will be fulfilled. They will immediately receive all manner of exquisite clothing, precious adornments, flower garlands and incense powder, and will enjoy music and entertainment to their heart's content."

伎。隨心所翫。皆令滿足。曼殊室利。是爲彼世尊藥師琉璃光如來、應正等覺、行菩薩道時、所發十二微妙上願。復次曼殊室利。彼世尊藥師琉璃光如來、行菩薩道時、所發大願。及彼佛土功德莊嚴。我若一劫、若一劫餘、說不能盡。然彼佛土、一向清淨。無有女人。亦無惡趣、及苦音聲。琉璃爲地。金繩界道。城闕宮閣。軒窗

"Manjusri, these are the Twelve Sublime Vows made by the World-Honored Medicine Buddha Lapis Lazuli Radiance Tathagata, Arhat, the Perfectly Enlightened, when he was cultivating the Bodhisattva path.

***

"Manjusri, as to these Great Vows made by the Medicine Buddha while he was following the Bodhisattva path -- *as well as the merits, virtues and adornments of his Buddha-land* -- I cannot possibly describe them all, not even if I were to speak for an eon or more. However, this Buddha-land is utterly pure. You will find no temptations,[8] no Evil Paths nor even cries of suffering there.

"In this land, the ground is made of lapis lazuli, the boundaries are demarcated with golden cords, the towns, towers, palaces, pavilions, as well as the balconies, windows and draperies are all made of the

羅網．皆七寶成．亦如西方極樂世界．功德莊嚴．等無差別。於其國中．有二菩薩摩訶薩．一名日光徧照．二名月光徧照．是彼無量無數菩薩衆之上首．次補佛處．悉能持彼世尊藥師琉璃光如來、正法寶藏。是故曼殊室利．諸有信心善男子善女人等．應當願生彼佛世界。

爾時世尊復告曼殊室利童子言．曼殊室

Seven Treasures. The merits, virtues and adornments of this realm are identical to those of Amitabha Buddha's Pure Land in the west.

"In this land dwell two great Bodhisattvas, Universal Solar Radiance and Universal Lunar Radiance. Among the countless Bodhisattvas, they are the leaders. Each in turn will serve as successor to the Medicine Buddha and as the able guardian of His True Dharma treasury.

"For these reasons, Manjusri, all devout men and women should vow to be born in this land."[9]

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Buddha Sakyamuni then told the Bodhisattva Manjusri:

利。有諸眾生。不識善惡。惟懷貪吝。不知布施、及施果報。愚癡無智。闕於信根。多聚財寶。勤加守護。見乞者來。其心不喜。設不獲已而行施時。如割身肉。深生痛惜。復有無量慳貪有情。積集資財。於其自身、尚不受用。何況能與父母妻子、奴婢作使、及來乞者。彼諸有情。從此命終。生餓鬼界、或傍生趣。由昔人間、曾得暫聞藥師琉璃光如來

"There are sentient beings who cannot tell right from wrong. They are greedy and mean, do not practice charity and do not understand the rewards of generosity. They are ignorant and unintelligent. Lacking the foundations of faith, they amass riches, which they assiduously hoard. Whenever they come across anyone seeking charity, they become annoyed; if forced to give, they feel as much pain and regret as if they were parting with their own flesh.

"Moreover, there are also countless sentient beings who are miserly and avaricious. They spend time amassing wealth, while not daring to spend it even on themselves, let alone on parents, spouse, children, servants or beggars. Upon their death, these stingy persons will descend onto the paths of hungry ghosts or animality.

"However, even though they may suffer such a fate, if in a previous existence in the human realm they happened to hear the name of the Medicine

名故。今在惡趣、暫得憶念彼如來名．即於念時、從彼處沒．還生人中．得宿命念．畏惡趣苦．不樂欲樂．好行惠施．讚歎施者。一切所有．悉無貪惜．漸次尚能以頭目、手足、血肉、身分、施來求者．況餘財物。

復次、曼殊室利．若諸有情．雖於如來受諸學處．而破尸羅。有雖不破尸羅．而破軌則。有於尸羅、軌則、雖得不壞．然毀正見。有雖

Buddha, and now recall and recite his name, even briefly, they will immediately vanish from the Evil Paths to be born once more among humans. However, they will remember their stay on the Evil Paths and, dreading their past suffering, will cease to wallow in worldly pleasures. They will gladly practice charity themselves, praise others who do so and will no longer be stingy.

"Eventually, they will even be able to donate their head, eyes, limbs, blood, flesh or other parts of their bodies to those who need them, not to mention mere material possessions.[10]

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"Moreover, Manjusri, there are sentient beings who have accepted the teachings of the Tathagata but have violated the Precepts (moral rules). Or, they have not violated the Precepts, but have broken the regulations. Or else, while they have violated neither the Precepts nor the regulations, they have disparaged Right Views; or they have not disparaged

不毀正見。而棄多聞。於佛所說契經深義、不能解了。有雖多聞。而增上慢。由增上慢覆蔽心故。自是非他。嫌謗正法。爲魔伴黨。如是愚人。自行邪見。復令無量俱胝有情、墮大險坑。此諸有情。應於地獄、傍生、鬼趣、流轉無窮。若得聞此藥師琉璃光如來名號。便捨惡行。修諸善法。不墮惡趣。設有不能捨諸惡行、修行善法。墮惡趣者。以彼如

Right Views but have abandoned extensive study of the Dharma and thus cannot explain the profound meaning of the sutras preached by the Buddha. Or else, although they may be learned, they have grown conceited. Because conceit clouds the mind, they believe that they are in the right and others are in the wrong. Therefore, they deprecate the correct Dharma and ally themselves with demons.

"Such deluded persons not only follow wrong views themselves, they also lead countless other sentient beings into the same great pitfall. These sentient beings are bound to wander endlessly on the paths of hell, animality and hungry ghosts.

"Yet, if they should succeed in hearing the name of the Medicine Buddha, they will abandon their evil conduct forthwith to cultivate wholesome ways, and thus avoid descending upon the Evil Paths.[11]

"Even those who cannot abandon evil practices or cultivate wholesome teachings, and thus descend

來本願威力。令其現前暫聞名號。從彼命終。還生人趣。得正見精進。善調意樂。便能捨家趣於非家。如來法中受持學處。無有毀犯。正見多聞。解甚深義。離增上慢。不謗正法。不爲魔伴。漸次修行諸菩薩行。速得圓滿。

復次、曼殊室利。若諸有情。慳貪嫉妒。自讚毀他。當墮三惡趣中。無量千歲、受諸劇苦。

onto the Evil Paths, can still benefit from the awesome power of the Medicine Buddha's past vows. If through this power, they should hear his name even briefly, their lives on the Evil Paths will end and they will be born again in the human realm. They will hold correct views, diligently pursue their practice and tame their minds. They will then be able to abandon the home life to become monks or nuns. They will uphold and study the Dharma of the Tathágatas rather than disparaging and violating it. With correct views and extensive study, they will fathom the extremely profound meaning of the teachings, abandon all conceit and cease to disparage the correct Dharma. They will no longer have demons as companions, but will gradually cultivate the practices of Bodhisattvas and swiftly perfect them.

"Moreover, Manjusri, there are sentient beings who are avaricious, envious, jealous and accustomed to praising themselves and disparaging others. They are bound to sink onto the three Evil Paths, suffering intense misery for countless thousands of years.

受劇苦已．從彼命終．來生人間．作牛馬駝驢．恆被鞭撻、飢渴逼惱．又常負重、隨路而行．或得爲人．生居下賤．作人奴婢．受他驅役．恆不自在．若昔人中、曾聞世尊藥師琉璃光如來名號．由此善因．今復憶念至心歸依．以佛神力．眾苦解脫．諸根聰利．智慧多聞．恆求勝法．常遇善友．永斷魔罥．破無明㲉．竭煩惱河．解脫一切生老病死、憂愁

When this intense suffering comes to an end, they will be born in the human world as oxen, horses, donkeys or camels. Often beaten and mistreated, they will suffer hunger and thirst and constantly travel along the road carrying heavy loads. If they succeed in returning as human beings, they will be among the poor and lowly, always serving others, constantly receiving orders, never being free.

"However, if any of them, in a former incarnation as a human being, have heard the name of the World-Honored Medicine Buddha and, as a result of this good cause, now remember and singlemindedly take refuge in him, they will, thanks to this Buddha's spiritual powers, escape all suffering. Their senses will be sharp and they will be wise and learned, constantly seeking the supreme teachings, and meeting with good spiritual friends. They will break forever through Mara's net, smash the shell of delusion, dry up the river of afflictions and thus escape all the worry and suffering of birth, old age, disease and death.

苦惱．

復次、曼殊室利．若諸有情．好喜乖離．更相鬬訟．惱亂自他．以身語意、造作增長種種惡業．展轉常爲不饒益事．互相謀害．告召山林樹塚等神．殺諸衆生．取其血肉．祭祀藥叉、羅刹婆等．書怨人名．作其形像．以惡呪術、而呪詛之．魘魅蠱道．呪起屍鬼．令斷彼命、及壞其身．是諸有情．若得聞此藥師

"Moreover, Manjusri, there are sentient beings who love to quarrel, create schisms and engage in legal disputes. They constantly make themselves and others suffer, creating and increasing all kinds of evil karma with body, speech and mind.

"They plot against one another without mercy, while invoking the spirits of mountains, forests, trees and tombs.

"They kill sentient beings and use their flesh and blood to propitiate the Yaksa and Raksasa demons.

"They may also write down the names and make images of those against whom they harbor grudges, curse them with evil mantras or try to harm or kill them with potions, witchcraft or demons-raised-from -the-dead.[12]

"However, if the victims succeed in hearing the name of the Medicine Buddha, none of these evil

琉璃光如來名號。彼諸惡事、悉不能害。一切展轉皆起慈心。利益安樂。無損惱意、及嫌恨心。各各歡悅。於自所受、生於喜足。不相侵陵。互爲饒益。

復次、曼殊室利。若有四衆、苾芻、苾芻尼、鄔波索迦、鄔波斯迦。及餘淨信善男子善女人等。有能受持八分齋戒。或經一年。或復三月。受持學處。以此善根。願生西方極樂

practices can harm them. Moreover, everyone concerned will develop compassionate minds, endeavoring to benefit and bring peace and joy to others.

"They will abandon their harmful thoughts and their angry, spiteful minds and all parties will be happy and satisfied with what they have.

"They will cease to encroach upon others but will instead seek to benefit one another.

***

"Moreover, Manjusri, within the Fourfold Assembly of Bhiksus, Bhiksunis, Upasakas and Upasikas, as well as among other men and women of pure faith, there are those who are able to adhere to the Eight Precepts for a full year or for three months a year, dedicating these good roots toward rebirth in the Western Pure Land of Amitabha, the Buddha of Infinite Life, so as to listen to the correct Dharma.

世界無量壽佛所、聽聞正法．而未定者。若聞世尊藥師琉璃光如來名號．臨命終時．有八大菩薩．其名曰文殊師利菩薩、觀世音菩薩、得大勢菩薩、無盡意菩薩、寶檀華菩薩、藥王菩薩、藥上菩薩、彌勒菩薩、是八大菩薩．乘空而來．示其道路．即於彼界種種雜色眾寶華中、自然化生。或有因此生於天上。雖生天上．而本善根亦未窮盡．不

"If their rebirth in the Pure Land is still uncertain, but they hear the name of the World-Honored Medicine Buddha, then, at the time of death, eight great Bodhisattvas, namely,

Manjusri,
Avalokitesvara,
Mahasthamaprapta,
Aksayamati,
Ratnacandana,
Bhaishajya-raja,
Bhaishajya-samudgata, and
Maitreya,

will traverse space and descend to show them the way. They will thereupon be reborn spontaneously in jeweled flowers of many hues.

"Moreover, there are those who are born in the celestial realms, thanks to [hearing the name of the Medicine Buddha]. Despite their birth in the celestial realms, their good roots are still not exhausted, and

復更生諸餘惡趣。天上壽盡。還生人間。或爲輪王。統攝四洲。威德自在。安立無量百千有情於十善道。或生刹帝利、婆羅門、居士、大家。多饒財寶。倉庫盈溢。形相端正。眷屬具足。聰明智慧。勇健威猛。如大力士。若是女人、得聞世尊藥師琉璃光如來名號。至心受持。於後不復更受女身。

復次、曼殊室利。彼藥師琉璃光如來得菩

thus they will not be born again on the Evil Paths. When their life-span in the celestial realms comes to an end, they may return to the human world as Wheel-turning Kings, ruling over the Four Continents [around Mount Sumeru]. With awesome virtues and ease, they will set countless hundreds of thousands of sentient beings onto the path of the Ten Virtues.

"Or else, such persons may be born as Ksatriyas (the military ruling class), or Brahmins or laymen of great families, with abundant wealth and overflowing granaries and storehouses. They will be endowed with noble features, numerous family members and retainers, as well as intelligence, wisdom, bravery, vigor and the imposing demeanor of a great hero. Likewise, if there is any woman who hears and singlemindedly holds fast to the name of the Medicine Buddha, she will never again be born in female form.[13]

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"Manjusri, after the Medicine Buddha attained Supreme Enlightenment, he realized, by virtue of his

提時．由本願力．觀諸有情、遇眾病苦．瘦攣、乾消、黃熱等病．或被魘魅蠱毒所中．或復短命．或時橫死．欲令是等病苦消除．所求願滿．時彼世尊入三摩地．名曰除滅一切眾生苦惱．既入定已．於肉髻中、出大光明．光中演說大陀羅尼曰。

南謨薄伽伐帝。鞞殺社。窶嚕薜琉璃。鉢喇婆。喝囉闍也。怛他揭多耶。阿囉喝帝。三藐

past vows, that sentient beings endured various ailments, such as emaciation, crippling disabilities, fever, dysentery, jaundice, etc. Some were the targets of black magic or various poisons, while others suffered short lives or untimely death. At that time, seeking to put an end to these miseries and fulfil the desires of sentient beings, he entered a samadhi called 'Eliminating All the Suffering and Afflictions of Sentient Beings'.

"Once he entered that samadhi, a brilliant light shone forth from his urna as he uttered a great Dharani:

Namo bhagavate
Bhaishajyaguru-vaidurya
Prabha-rajaya
Tathagataya
Arthate
Samyak-sambuddhaya
Tadyatha

三勃陀耶。怛姪他。唵。鞞殺逝。鞞殺逝。鞞殺社。三沒揭帝莎訶。

爾時光中說此呪已．大地震動．放大光明．一切衆生、病苦皆除．受安隱樂。曼殊室利．若見男子女人、有病苦者．應當一心爲彼病人、常清淨澡漱．或食或藥、或無蟲水．呪一百八徧．與彼服食．所有病苦．悉皆消滅。若有所求．至心念誦．皆得如是、無病延年。

OM BHAISHAJYE BHAISHAJYE
BHAISHAJYA-SAMUDGATE SVAHA.[14]

"As soon as the Medicine Buddha, in his radiance, had uttered this Dharani, the entire cosmos rumbled and shook. Brilliant lights shone forth, allowing all sentient beings to escape disease and suffering and enjoy peace and happiness.[15]

"Manjusri, if you come across any man (or woman) suffering illness, you should constantly cleanse him, bathe him and rinse his mouth. You should singlemindedly recite this Dharani 108 times on his behalf, over his food, medicine or water from which insects have been removed. Once he has consumed the food or drink, his illness and suffering will disappear.

"If the patient has a particular wish and singlemindedly recites this Dharani, his wish will be fulfilled. He will be free of disease, enjoy a longer life and, at death, be born in the realm of the Medicine

命終之後．生彼世界．得不退轉、乃至菩提。是故曼殊室利．若有男子女人．於彼藥師琉璃光如來、至心殷重、恭敬供養者．常持此呪．勿令廢忘。

復次、曼殊室利．若有淨信男子女人．得聞藥師琉璃光如來、應正等覺、所有名號．聞已誦持。晨嚼齒木．澡漱清淨．以諸香華、燒香塗香．作衆伎樂．供養形像。於此經典．若

Buddha. He will then be beyond retrogression and eventually realize Supreme Enlightenment.

"Therefore, Manjusri, any man or woman who singlemindedly reveres and respectfully makes offerings to the Medicine Buddha should constantly recite this Dharani, never letting it out of his mind.

**

"Moreover, Manjusri, upon hearing the various names of the Medicine Buddha Lapis Lazuli Radiance Tathagata, Arhat, the Perfectly Enlightened, men and women of pure faith should recite and hold fast to this name.

"Each morning, at dawn, having bathed themselves and cleaned their teeth, they should make offerings of fragrant flowers, incense, perfume and various kinds of music before an image of this Buddha. Furthermore, they should copy this sutra or

自書．若教人書．一心受持．聽聞其義。於彼法師．應修供養．一切所有資身之具．悉皆施與．勿令乏少。如是便蒙諸佛護念．所求願滿．乃至菩提。

爾時曼殊室利童子白佛言．世尊．我當誓於像法轉時．以種種方便．令諸淨信善男子善女人等、得聞世尊藥師琉璃光如來名號．乃至睡中、亦以佛名覺悟其耳。世尊．

गुल्मी, थानपति-२ निवासी वेदराज ज्ञवालीद्वारा
वाल्मीकि विद्यापीठ पुस्तकालयलाई
उपहार स्वरूप ....प्रदान ।
वेदराज्ञवाली
२०३४।११।२८

have others do so, as well as singlemindedly recite it and listen to explanations of its meaning.

"They should offer all the necessities of life to the Dharma masters who teach this sutra, making sure they lack nothing.

"In this way, devout men and women will be under the protection of the Buddhas. All their wishes will be fulfilled and they will eventually realize Supreme Enlightenment."

***

The Bodhisattva Manjusri then respectfully addressed the Buddha: "O, World-Honored One, I vow that in the Dharma Semblance Age, I will use every skillful means to help men and women of pure faith hear the name of the World-Honored Medicine Buddha. Even in their sleep, I will awaken their consciousness with the name of this Buddha.

若於此經受持讀誦．或復爲他演說開示．
若自書．若教人書．恭敬尊重、以種種華香、
塗香、末香、燒香．華鬘瓔珞．旛蓋伎樂．而爲
供養。以五色綵、作囊盛之．掃灑淨處．敷設
高座、而用安處。爾時四大天王、與其眷屬、
及餘無量百千天眾．皆詣其所．供養守護。
世尊．若此經寶流行之處．有能受持．以彼
世尊藥師琉璃光如來本願功德、及聞名

"O, World-Honored One, if any devout persons should read, recite and uphold this sutra, or lecture upon it, explaining its meaning to others, or copy it or have others copy it, or if they should pay it the utmost reverence, adorning it with fragrant flowers, perfumes, incense powder and sticks, garlands, necklaces, banners, canopies, dance and music and protecting it with precious, multi-colored cloth – and if they should prepare a clean site, erect a high altar and place the sutra upon it – the Four Great Celestial Kings, their retinues as well as countless hundreds of thousands of other divinities, will thereupon proceed to this place to make offerings and guard this sutra.

***

"World-Honored One, wherever this treasure of a sutra has spread and there are people capable of upholding it, you should know that, thanks to the Medicine Buddha's past vows, his virtues and the power of his name, the place will be free of untimely

號。當知是處無復橫死。亦復不爲諸惡鬼神奪其精氣。設已奪者。還得如故。身心安樂。

佛告曼殊室利。如是如是。如汝所說。曼殊室利。若有淨信善男子善女人等。欲供養彼世尊藥師琉璃光如來者。應先造立彼佛形像。敷清淨座、而安處之。散種種華。燒種種香。以種種幢旛、莊嚴其處。七日七夜、

death. In that place, there will no longer be evil demons or spirits to sap the vital energy of the people.

"Even if there were, these devout men and women would recover, enjoying good health and peace of mind."

***

The Buddha then spoke to Manjusri:

"So be it, so be it, Manjusri. It is just as you say. If men and women of pure faith wish to make offerings to the World-Honored Medicine Buddha, they should first make an image of this Buddha, and then place it upon a pure, clean altar.

"They should scatter all kinds of flowers, burn all varieties of incense and adorn the place with banners and pennants. For seven days and nights

受八分齋戒。食清淨食。澡浴香潔。著清淨衣。應生無垢濁心、無怒害心。於一切有情、起利益安樂、慈悲喜捨平等之心。鼓樂歌讚。右繞佛像。復應念彼如來本願功德。讀誦此經。思惟其義。演說開示。隨所樂求。一切皆遂。求長壽得長壽。求富饒得富饒。求官位得官位。求男女得男女。若復有人、忽得惡夢。見諸惡相。或怪鳥來集。或於住處、

they should adhere to the Eight Precepts, consume only pure food, bathe and perfume themselves, put on clean, fresh clothing and keep their mind undefiled, free of anger or malice. They should develop feelings of kindness, compassion, joy and equanimity toward all sentient beings, while bringing them benefits, peace and happiness. They should play music and sing the praises of the Medicine Buddha, while circumambulating his image in a rightward [clockwise] direction. Moreover, they should bear in mind his merits, virtues and past vows, while reading and reciting this sutra, reflecting on its meaning and explaining it to others.

"Whatever they wish will then be fulfilled – whether it be longevity, wealth, or anything else, such as official position or the birth of sons and daughters.

"Moreover, if any sentient beings suddenly suffer nightmares and witness all kinds evil omens – such as flocks of strange birds, or hundreds of ominous signs throughout their homes – they need

百怪出現。此人若以眾妙資具、恭敬供養彼世尊藥師琉璃光如來者。惡夢惡相、諸不吉祥、皆悉隱沒。不能爲患。或有水火。刀毒懸險。惡象師子。虎狼熊羆。毒蛇惡蠍。蜈蚣蚰蜒。蚊蝱等怖。若能至心憶念彼佛。恭敬供養。一切怖畏、皆得解脫。若他國侵擾。盜賊反亂。憶念恭敬彼如來者。亦皆解脫。復次、曼殊室利。若有淨信善男子善女人

only venerate the World-Honored Medicine Buddha with all kinds of wonderful offerings, and the nightmares, evil omens and inauspicious signs will all disappear, no longer able to cause them harm.

"If any sentient beings are in fear of water, fire, knives, poison, falling off a precipice, or of vicious beasts – such as wild elephants, lions, tigers, wolves, bears, venomous snakes, scorpions, centipedes, millipedes, [infectious] mosquitos or gnats -- they need only singlemindedly recall and recite the name of the Medicine Buddha, while respectfully making offerings to him, and they will escape all these terrors. If a country should be subject to foreign invasion, banditry or rebellion, the inhabitants need only recall and recite the name of the Medicine Buddha, while paying homage to him, and all these calamities will likewise disappear.

"Moreover, Manjusri, there are men and women of pure faith who throughout their lives have not

等。乃至盡形不事餘天。惟當一心歸佛法僧。受持禁戒。若五戒、十戒、菩薩四百戒、苾芻二百五十戒、苾芻尼五百戒。於所受中、或有毀犯。怖墮惡趣。若能專念彼佛名號、恭敬供養者。必定不受三惡趣生。或有女人、臨當產時。受於極苦。若能至心稱名禮讚、恭敬供養彼如來者。衆苦皆除。所生之子。身分具足。形色端正。見者歡喜。利根聰

worshipped any deities, but have singlemindedly taken refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha and upheld the Precepts – the five or ten lay Precepts, the 400 Bodhisattva Precepts or the 250 Bhikṣu or 500 Bhiksuni Precepts.[16] However, if any of them have violated the Precepts they have taken and fear falling onto an evil path, they should concentrate on reciting the name of the Medicine Buddha and respectfully make offerings to him. They will then certainly avoid rebirth on the Three Evil Paths.

"If women who experience extreme pain during childbirth can, with utmost sincerity, recite the name of the Medicine Buddha, praise, venerate and make offerings to him, they will be relieved of their suffering.

"The children born to them will be without defects, attractive in appearance, causing those who see them to rejoice. They will be endowed with keen senses and intelligence, along with a quiet

明。安隱少病。無有非人奪其精氣。爾時世尊告阿難言。如我稱揚彼世尊藥師琉璃光如來所有功德。此是諸佛甚深行處。難可解了、汝爲信不。阿難白言。大德、世尊。我於如來所說契經。不生疑惑。所以者何。一切如來。身語意業、無不淸淨。世尊。此日月輪、可令墮落。妙高山王、可使傾動。諸佛所言。無有異也。世尊。有諸衆生。信根

disposition. They will seldom become ill, nor will evil spirits sap their vital energy."

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The World-Honored One then asked Ananda:

"I have just extolled the merits and virtues of the World-Honored Medicine Buddha. These merits and virtues are the extremely profound practices of all Buddhas, but are difficult to explain. Do you have faith in them or not?"

Ananda respectfully replied: "O, Great Virtuous World-Honored One, I do not have any doubts about the sutras preached by the Tathagatas. Why? It is because the Tathagatas' karma of body, speech and mind are all pure. O, World-Honored One, the sun and the moon may fall, Mount Sumeru, the majestic king of mountains, may tremble, but the words of the Buddhas can never change. O, World-Honored One, some sentient beings, whose roots of

不具聞說諸佛甚深行處。作是思惟。云何但念藥師琉璃光如來一佛名號。便獲爾所功德勝利。由此不信返生誹謗。彼於長夜、失大利樂。墮諸惡趣。流轉無窮。佛告阿難。是諸有情。若聞世尊藥師琉璃光如來名號。至心受持。不生疑惑。墮惡趣者。無有是處。阿難。此是諸佛甚深所行。難可信解。汝今能受、當知皆是如來威力。阿難。一切

faith are deficient, may hear of the sublime practices of the Buddhas and think, 'how can we obtain these merits, virtues and great advantages just by reciting the name of the Medicine Buddha alone?' Because of this lack of faith, they even develop disparaging thoughts, thus forfeiting great benefits and remaining in the long, dark night [of ignorance]. They descend onto the Evil Paths, revolving along them without end."

The Buddha then said to Ananda:

"If these sentient beings should hear the name of the World-Honored Medicine Buddha, singlemindedly recite and hold fast to it without harboring doubts, then it will be impossible for them to sink onto the Evil Paths.

"O, Ananda! These extremely profound practices of the Buddhas are difficult to believe in, difficult to understand. Yet you are now able to accept them. You should realize that this is all due to the awesome power of the Tathagatas.

聲聞獨覺、及未登地諸菩薩等。皆悉不能如實信解。惟除一生所繫菩薩。阿難。人身難得。於三寶中、信敬尊重。亦難可得。聞世尊藥師琉璃光如來名號。復難於是。阿難。彼藥師琉璃光如來、無量菩薩行、無量善巧方便、無量廣大願。我若一劫、若一劫餘、而廣說者。劫可速盡。彼佛行願善巧方便、無有盡也。

"O, Ananda! Even the Sravakas, Pratyeka Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who have not reached the Ten Grounds (Stages) cannot understand and believe in this truth. Only the Bodhisattvas who are one lifetime away from Buddhahood can.

"O, Ananda! A human rebirth is difficult to achieve; however, to believe in, respect and honor the Triple Jewel is even more difficult. To hear the name of the World-Honored Medicine Buddha is more difficult still.

"O, Ananda, the Medicine Buddha has cultivated countless Bodhisattva practices, employed countless skillful means and made countless far-reaching vows. If I were to take an eon or more to recount them, the eon would come to an end before I could exhaustively describe all these wonderful practices, vows and skillful means."

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爾時眾中有一菩薩摩訶薩。名曰救脫。即從座起。偏袒右肩。右膝著地。曲躬合掌、而白佛言。大德世尊。像法轉時。有諸眾生、爲種種患之所困厄。長病羸瘦。不能飲食。喉脣乾燥。見諸方暗。死相現前。父母親屬朋友知識。涕泣圍繞。然彼自身臥在本處。見琰魔使、引其神識至於琰魔法王之前。然諸有情、有俱生神。隨其所作。若罪若福。皆

At that time, a Great Bodhisattva in the Assembly, named Salvation, arose from his seat, adjusted his robe to bare his right shoulder, knelt on his right knee, bowed and, with palms joined, respectfully addressed the Buddha:

"O, Great Virtuous World-Honored One, in the Dharma Semblance Age, there will be sentient beings who suffer numerous calamities, and are always sick and emaciated, unable to eat or drink, their throats dry and lips parched, their eyes seeing darkness everywhere. As the signs of death appear, they are surrounded by parents, family, friends and acquaintances weeping and lamenting.

"As such a patient lies in bed, he sees the messengers of Yama arrive to lead his consciousness before this King of Justice. Now, all sentient beings have inborn spirits who record everything they do, both their transgressions and their merits.[17] These

具書之．盡持授與琰魔法王。爾時彼王推問其人．計算所作．隨其罪福、而處斷之。時彼病人親屬、知識．若能爲彼歸依世尊藥師琉璃光如來．請諸眾僧轉讀此經．然七層之燈．懸五色續命神旛。或有是處、彼識得還．如在夢中．明了自見。或經七日、或二十一日、或三十五日、或四十九日．彼識還時．如從夢覺．皆自憶知善不善業、所得果

spirits then present the patient's entire record to King Yama.

"At that time, the King questions the dying person and tabulates his good and bad karma before deciding upon his fate.

"If, at that point, the relatives and acquaintances of the patient are able to take refuge in the World-Honored Medicine Buddha on his behalf, invite monks and nuns to recite this sutra, light seven-tiered lamps and hang multi-colored longevity banners, his consciousness may return then and there, and he will see himself clearly, as though in a dream.

"Or else, after 7, 21, 35 or 49 days, when his consciousness returns, as if awakening from a dream, he will recall his good and bad karma and the consequences thereof. [18]

報。由自證見業果報故。乃至命難、亦不造作諸惡之業。是故淨信善男子善女人等。皆應受持藥師琉璃光如來名號。隨力所能。恭敬供養。

爾時阿難問救脫菩薩曰。善男子。應云何恭敬供養彼世尊藥師琉璃光如來。續命旛燈、復云何造。救脫菩薩言。大德。若有病人、欲脫病苦。當爲其人、七日七夜受持八

"Having personally witnessed the consequences of karma, he will never again create evil karma, even if his life is in danger. Therefore, men and women of pure faith should uphold the name of the Medicine Buddha, venerate and make offerings to him according to their means."

***

Ananda then asked the Bodhisattva Salvation: "Good Man, how should we venerate and make offerings to the World-Honored Medicine Buddha and how should we make the longevity pennants and lamps?"

The Bodhisattva Salvation replied: "Virtuous One, in order to help the patient recover, you should adhere to the Eight Precepts for seven days and seven nights, make offerings of food, drink and other

分齋戒。應以飲食、及餘資具。隨力所辦、供養苾芻僧。晝夜六時、禮拜供養彼世尊藥師琉璃光如來。讀誦此經四十九徧。然四十九燈。造彼如來形像七軀。一一像前、各置七燈。一一燈量、大如車輪。乃至四十九日光明不絕。造五色綵旛。長四十九搩手。應放雜類衆生、至四十九。可得過度危厄之難。不爲諸橫惡鬼所持。

necessities to a [group of] monks and nuns in accordance with your means, pay homage and respectfully make offerings to the World-Honored Medicine Buddha six times a day and recite this sutra forty-nine times.

"You should light forty-nine lamps, make seven images of the Medicine Buddha and place seven lamps, each as large as a cartwheel, before each image, letting them burn continuously for forty-nine days and nights.

"You should also make multi-colored banners, forty-nine hand-lengths long.

"Furthermore, you should release forty-nine species of animals [thus sparing their lives].

The patient may then escape danger and will not be under the sway of evil demons, nor subject to untimely death.[19]

復次、阿難．若刹帝利、灌頂王等、災難起時．所謂人眾疾疫難．他國侵逼難．自界叛逆難．星宿變怪難．日月薄蝕難．非時風雨難．過時不雨難．彼刹帝利灌頂王等．爾時應於一切有情、起慈悲心．赦諸繫閉．依前所說供養之法、供養彼世尊藥師琉璃光如來。由此善根、及彼如來本願力故．令其國界、即得安隱．風雨順時．穀稼成熟．一切有

"Moreover, Ananda, when the anointed Ksatriya kings find themselves beset by calamities, such as epidemics, foreign invasion, internal insurrection, an adverse alignment of the stars, an eclipse of the sun or the moon, unseasonable storms or a failure of the monsoons, they should develop compassionate feelings toward all sentient beings.

"They should also pardon prisoners and make offerings to the World-Honored Medicine Buddha in accordance with the rites described earlier.

"Thanks to these good roots and the power of the Medicine Buddha's past vows,[20] peace and stability will immediately return to the affected countries; the rains and winds will be favorable; crops will mature on time and everyone will be

情．無病歡樂。於其國中．無有暴惡藥叉等神、惱有情者。一切惡相、皆即隱沒。而刹帝利灌頂王等。壽命色力．無病自在．皆得增益。阿難．若帝后妃主．儲君王子．大臣輔相．中宮綵女．百官黎庶．爲病所苦．及餘厄難．亦應造立五色神旛．然燈續明．放諸生命．散雜色華．燒衆名香．病得除愈．衆難解脫。爾時阿難問救脫菩薩言．善男子．云何已

healthy and happy. The country will be free of evil Yaksas out to harm the populace. All the evil omens will immediately disappear, and these anointed Ksatriya kings will enjoy greater longevity and vitality, finer appearance as well as greater health and freedom than ever before.

"O, Ananda, the queens, consorts, princesses, royal heirs, great ministers, court ladies, officials or commoners who suffer disease and other misfortunes should also make offerings to the Medicine Buddha. They should make multi-colored longevity banners, light lamps, ensuring that they burn continuously, liberate all kinds of animals, scatter flowers of various colors and burn various kinds of incense renowned for their fragrance. They will then recover from disease and escape misfortune."

Ananda then asked the Bodhisattva Salvation: "Good Man, how can an expiring life-span be lengthened?"

盡之命、而可增益。救脫菩薩言。大德。汝豈不聞如來說有九橫死耶。是故勸造續命旛燈。修諸福德。以修福故。盡其壽命、不經苦患。阿難問言。九橫云何。救脫菩薩言。若諸有情。得病雖輕。然無醫藥、及看病者。設復遇醫授以非藥。實不應死、而便橫死。又信世間邪魔外道妖孽之師。妄說禍福。便生恐動。心不自正。卜問覓禍。殺種種眾生、

The Bodhisattva Salvation replied: "Virtuous One, did you not hear the Tathagata explain the nine forms of untimely death? I would urge everyone to make longevity banners and lamps and cultivate merits and virtues. Thanks to such cultivation, they will escape suffering and misfortune throughout their lives."

Ananda further asked: "What are the nine forms of untimely death?"

The Bodhisattva Salvation replied:

"Some sentient beings contract a minor illness which goes untreated for lack of a physician or medicine; or else, even though there is a physician, he prescribes the wrong medicine, causing premature death. Or, the patients, believing the false pronouncements of earthly demons, heretics or practitioners of black magic, may panic -- unable to calm their minds. They may then engage in divination or perform animal

解奏神明。呼諸魍魎。請乞福祐。欲冀延年。終不能得。愚癡迷惑。信邪倒見。遂令横死。入於地獄。無有出期。是名初横。二者、横被王法之所誅戮。三者、畋獵嬉戲。耽淫嗜酒。放逸無度。横爲非人奪其精氣。四者、横爲火焚。五者、横爲水溺。六者、横爲種種惡獸所噉。七者、横墮山崖。八者、横爲毒藥、厭禱、呪詛、起屍鬼等之所中害。九者、飢渴所困。

sacrifices in order to propitiate the spirits, praying for blessings and longevity – all in vain. Through ignorance, confusion and reliance on wrong, inverted views, they meet with untimely death and sink into the hells, with no end in sight. This is the *first* form of untimely death.

"The *second* form is execution, by royal decree.

"The *third* is losing one's vitality to the demons through hunting, gambling, debauchery, drunkenness or extreme dissipation.

"The *fourth* is death by fire; the *fifth* is death by drowning. The *sixth* is being devoured by wild animals.

"The *seventh* is falling off a mountain or a cliff. The *eighth* is death by poison, incantations, evil mantras or demons-raised-from-the-dead. The *ninth* is from hunger or thirst, for lack of food and water.

不得飲食．而便橫死。是爲如來畧說橫死、有此九種．其餘復有無量諸橫．難可具說。復次、阿難．彼琰魔王、主領世間名籍之記．若諸有情、不孝五逆．破辱三寶．壞君臣法．毀於性戒．琰魔法王、隨罪輕重．考而罰之。是故我今勸諸有情．然燈造旛．放生修福．令度苦厄．不遭衆難。爾時衆中有十二藥叉大將．俱在會座．所謂

"These are the nine forms of untimely death mentioned by the Tathagatas. There are also countless other forms, which are too numerous to describe.

"Moreover, Ananda, King Yama is responsible for keeping the karmic register of everyone in the world. If sentient beings have been unfilial,[21] committed the Five Cardinal Sins, disparaged the Triple Jewel, broken the laws of the land or violated the major Precepts, King Yama will mete out punishment according to the infraction. Therefore, I urge sentient beings to light lamps, make banners, liberate animals and cultivate merits in order to avoid suffering and misfortune."[22]

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At that time, there were twelve powerful Yaksa generals in the Great Assembly named:

宮毗羅大將　伐折羅大將
迷企羅大將　安底羅大將
額你羅大將　珊底羅大將
因達羅大將　波夷羅大將
摩虎羅大將　眞達羅大將
招杜羅大將　毗羯羅大將

此十二藥叉大將．一一各有七千藥叉、以爲眷屬。同時擧聲白佛言．世尊．我等今者

Kumbhira,
Vajra,
Mihira,
Andira,
Anila,
Sandila,
Indra,
Pajra,
Makura,
Sindura,
Catura, and
Vikarala.

Each was accompanied by a retinue of 7,000 Yaksas.

They all raised their voices in unison and said respectfully to the Buddha:

"O, World-Honored One, today, thanks to the Buddha's awesome power, we have succeeded in

蒙佛威力．得聞世尊藥師琉璃光如來名號．不復更有惡趣之怖。我等相率、皆同一心．乃至盡形、歸佛法僧．誓當荷負一切有情．爲作義利．饒益安樂。隨於何等村城國邑、空閒林中．若有流布此經．或復受持藥師琉璃光如來名號．恭敬供養者．我等眷屬、衛護是人．皆使解脫一切苦難。諸有願求．悉令滿足。或有疾厄、求度脫者．亦應讀

hearing the name of the Medicine Buddha and no longer fear descending onto the Evil Paths.

"Together, with one mind, we take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha for the rest of our lives and pledge to support all sentient beings – bringing them genuine benefits and joy.

"Wherever this sutra circulates or wherever there are sentient beings who hold fast to the name of the Medicine Buddha and respectfully make offerings to him, whether in villages, towns, kingdoms or in the wilderness, we will all protect them.

"We will release them from all suffering and calamities and see to it that all their wishes are fulfilled.[23]

"Sentient beings afflicted by disease or calamity and wishing to escape should also read or

誦此經。以五色縷、結我名字。得如願已。然後解結。

爾時世尊讚諸藥叉大將言。善哉善哉。大藥叉將。汝等念報世尊藥師琉璃光如來恩德者。常應如是利益安樂一切有情。

爾時阿難白佛言。世尊。當何名此法門。我等云何奉持。佛告阿難。此法門名說藥師琉璃光如來本願功德。亦名說十二神將

recite this sutra. They should 'knot' our names with multi-colored strands – untying them when their wishes are fulfilled."[24]

Thereupon, Buddha Sakyamuni praised the great Yaksa generals with these words: "Good indeed, good indeed, great Yaksa generals! Those of you who wish to repay the benevolence and the virtues of the World-Honored Medicine Buddha should always benefit and bring joy to all sentient beings in this way."

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Ananda then asked the Buddha: "World-Honored One, what should we call this teaching, and how should we adhere to it and put it into practice?"

Buddha Sakyamuni replied to Ananda: "This teaching is called the 'Past Vows, Merits and Virtues of the Medicine Buddha' or the 'Dharani of the Vows of the Twelve Yaksa Generals to Benefit Sentient Beings'

饒益有情結願神呪。亦名拔除一切業障。應如是持。時薄伽梵說是語已。諸菩薩摩訶薩。及大聲聞、國王、大臣、婆羅門、居士、天、龍、藥叉、健達縛、阿素洛、揭路荼、緊捺洛、莫呼落伽、人非人等、一切大眾。聞佛所說。皆大歡喜。信受奉行。

藥師琉璃光如來本願功德經

南無藥師會上佛菩薩（三稱）

or 'Eradicating of All Karmic Obstacles'. You should uphold it as such."

When Buddha Sakyamuni finished speaking, the great Bodhisattvas, as well as the great Sravakas, kings, ministers, brahmins, laypersons, devas, nagas, yaksas, gandharvas, asuras, garudas, kinnaras, mahoragas and other human and non-human beings all rejoiced at the Buddha's words. They faithfully accepted them and put them into practice.

Sutra of the Medicine Buddha
Lapis Lazuli Radiance Tathagata:
His Past Vows, Merits and Virtues

Homage to the Medicine Buddha's
Great Assembly of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas

The Buddhas of the Ten Directions
Always keep them in mind and protect them ...;
Wherever they are reborn,
The Bodhisattvas are their friends.
(*Brahma Net Sutra*)

Notes

1. This is the single most important point of the sutra. If you have utmost faith in the words of the sutra, then all the promises of the Medicine Buddha are true. If, however, you harbor even a trace of doubt, no amount of recitation or lamp-lighting will bring the benefits desired. This crucial point is common to all sutras. This intense state of faith is usually accompanied by "tears streaming down one's face", as exemplified in the *Avatamsaka Sutra* by Sudhana in the presence of his primary spiritual benefactor, the Bodhisattva Manjusri:

> Then Sudhana, pleased, enraptured, transported with joy, delighted, happy, and cheerful, laid his head at the feet of Manjushri in respect, circled Manjushri hundreds and thousands of times, and looked at him hundreds and thousands of times ... *with tears streaming down his face as he wept*, and left Manjushri (Thomas Cleary, tr., Vol. III, p. 55-56).

2. *Representation of the Medicine Buddha*:

In later Chinese Buddhism (apparently beginning in the Sung period), Bhaisajyaguru (the Medicine Buddha) was depicted in a different sort of assembly. Here the Buddha of Healing is joined by Amitabha and Sakyamuni to form a basic trinity important in Chinese Buddhism to the present day. This group, often depicted in massive sculpture, commonly is found on the principal altar of the main assembly hall of Chinese Buddhist temples. Here the central image of Sakyamuni represents the basic Buddha-principle... Bhaisajyaguru to the east (the direction of his paradise) watches over all living beings, protecting them, strengthening their health, and preventing them from suffering untimely death; Amitabha to the west is the compassionate lord who cares for those in the spirit world after death, who watches over them in his Western Realm of Bliss (Birnbaum, p. 252-253).

In Mahayana Buddhism, the Medicine Buddha watches over sentient beings in their current lifetimes, granting them peace, happiness and freedom from disease and other calamities. Amitabha Buddha watches over sentient beings after their death, ensuring them a favorable rebirth in his land. The combination of current and future peace and happiness leads eventually to *ultimate peace, happiness and liberation*, that is, Buddhahood (Master Thich Thien Hue).

3. The full name of the Medicine Buddha (Bhaisajya-guru) is rendered in this text as *Medicine Buddha Lapis Lazuli Radiance Tathagata*. Please note other variants occurring in the literature:

Healing Buddha
Master of Healing
Master of Medicine
Azure Radiance Tathagata
Vaidurya Light Tathagata
Beryl Radiance Tathagata.

Moreover, many popular books use the Japanese name *Yakushi*.

According to V. de Visser (*Ancient Buddhism*, vol. II), most of the Bodhisattvas in the Medicine Buddha's Assembly are also depicted surrounding Amitabha Buddha, in paintings of Amitabha's descent to welcome the faithful (Raigo). This is another example of the close relationship between the Medicine Buddha and Amitabha Buddha in the Mahayana tradition.

4. The mudra is not fixed. In the Tibetan tradition, for example, instead of the Varuda (compassion) mudra, the Medicine Buddha is sometimes depicted forming the "taking the earth as witness" mudra. Moreover, rather than forming a mudra, the right hand may hold the healing fruit (myrobolan) as well as its stem and leaves. Furthermore, the entire body of the Medicine Buddha is painted blue. (Details graciously provided by Upasaka Harry Leong.)

5. Please note, however, that in the Vajradhatu Mandala of the Esoteric School, the Medicine Buddha is apparently associated with Aksobhya Buddha (Louis Frederic).

6. The Medicine Buddha provides support to Pure Land cultivators who may need freedom from mundane concerns (disease, material need, calamity, untimely death, etc.) in order to concentrate singlemindedly on their goal of

rebirth in Sukhavati. This may explain the representation, on the major altar of many Mahayana temples, of a massive trinity of Sakyamuni Buddha, the Medicine Buddha and Amitabha Buddha. One notable example of this trinity is in the Mahayana Temple complex in South Cairo, NY (USA).

Exponents of Tibetan tantric practice and of the Chinese/Japanese forms of Pure Land practice will recognize close affinities between what they have learned and what is advocated in these Healing Buddha sutras. Those familiar with works about Kuan Yin (Avalokitesvara, Chenresigs) will find that the powers attributed to the Healing Buddhas, and the reasons for those powers, are very similar in character to those attributed to that Bodhisattva ... It can be confidently asserted that similar methods and values pertaining to the Healing Buddhas are accepted by the vast majority of Mahayana Buddhists, no matter to which school they belong (John Blofeld).

In Mahayana Buddhism, there are many popular Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. The reason why some persons seek the help, for example, of the Bodhisattva Kuan Yin while others call upon the Medicine Buddha, is related to their past affinities (causes and conditions) with a particular Buddha or Bodhisattva. The important point to remember is that the Medicine Buddha specializes in curing diseases – particularly "incurable" ones!

The Medicine Buddha and Amitabha Buddha each has his own Pure Land, the Lapis Lazuli Pure Land and Sukhavati, respectively. Both are ideal, transcendental realms where practitioners can further their cultivation and ultimately attain Buddhahood. The main difference between the two Pure Lands (indeed between Sukhavati and any other Pure Land) lies in its accessibility. It is the difference between a country which receives immigrants and one which actively goes out to recruit them. The Medicine Buddha's special mission is to prevent calamities and cure illnesses, while the principal vow of

Amitabha Buddha is to make his Pure Land a place of refuge for all sentient beings. See also Note 2.

7. *Names of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas*:

The name of a Buddha or a Bodhisattva is presumed to embody his virtues and powers. Hence, invocation of the name of a Buddha or a Bodhisattva activates those virtues and powers (Luis O. Gomez, *The Land of Bliss*, p. 311).

This emphasis on names is frequently stressed in the Mahayana teachings about Bodhisattvas and Buddhas; in these teachings, the names of great beings are held to be precious. By hearing the name of the great being, one can gain contact with his spiritual force and protection (Birnbaum, p. 40).

8. The original wording in the sutra is "no women". We have translated it, following Prof. Raoul Birnbaum, as "no temptations". In the Buddha's time, some 2500 years ago, the clergy was overwhelmingly male, and therefore the source of temptation to abandon celibacy was viewed as largely female. The context of the sutra also suggests "temptations" as the better rendering.

9. Please note that the word used here is "birth", not "rebirth" as in the *Amitabha Sutra*. See also note 6, last paragraph.

10. To succeed in cultivation, it is essential to develop the Bodhi Mind (i.e., to seek Buddhahood for the benefit of sentient beings). To do so, the advanced practitioner must set aside the ego, sever attachment to the self, and thus be willing to sacrifice himself for sentient beings (donate his eyes, ears, etc.).This important point, illustrated time and time again in the *Jatakas* (accounts of the previous lives of the Buddha), is explained in detail in the *Brahma Net Sutra*, Secondary Precept no. 16. This sutra is available free of charge from the International Buddhist Monastic Institute (tel. 818-

893-5317), the Sutra Translation Committee of the US and Canada (tel. 718-584-0621), the Buddha Educational Foundation in Taiwan (tel. 886-2-23951198, *email* overseas@budaedu.org.tw).

> One of the foremost exponents of Ch'an in modern China, Hsu Yun, burned off his finger in sacrifice for the sake of his deceased mother in his fifty-eight year. This is discussed in his autobiography translated by Charles Luk, Empty Cloud: *The Autobiography of the Chinese Zen Master Hsu Yun* (Rochester, New York 1974), pp.27-28 (Birnbaum, p. 49).

11. According to the sutra, the efficacity of the Medicine Buddha's name is absolute. All karma, even Fixed Karma, or the heavy karma created by the Five Cardinal Sins, is erased through concentration on the Medicine Buddha.

12. The notion that a ghost or demon can be invoked through an evil mantra is by no means limited to Asia:

> In the soil beneath a mango tree, Eliezer, one of Zohar's sons and the author's father, draws the outline of a human figure and tries to conjure a golem out of the ground. In Jewish mysticism, a golem is a supernatural creature created from dirt and with magical words ... Like the Frankenstein monster, golems are supposed to be benign and protective, but as they are made by man, not God, they are imperfect and frequently run amok (*NYT Book Review*, 10/22/2000).

13. *Rebirth as a male*:

> The sudden transformation of a woman into a male means nothing but the transcendence of the differences between male and female. Sakyamuni Buddha asserted that animals, birds, worms, plants and trees, as well as human beings, possess the Buddha- nature. How could he then discriminate between men and women? It is impossible. Observed with the Buddha's eyes, all living beings are equal. We must never misunderstand this (Niwano, *Buddhism for Today*).

14. Please note that while the quotation begins with "Namo bhagawate" ("homage to the Medicine Buddha"), the Dharani (Mantra) itself is the phrase beginning with the word "Om" and ending with "svaha".

15. An explanation for this cosmic change is offered below:

> When the Buddha taught, our world became a celestial abode. The power of his articulated wisdom made it possible for those present to see beyond mundane reality, into the inherent purity and cosmic presence that eternally surround us. The mandala that appeared around him is a vision of humanity's potential: enlightened mind in harmony with nature, working for the benefit of all. It is the archtypal pristine world inhabited by beings living in a golden age of spiritual achievement: heaven on earth. It is our world, after the gloom of ignorance and confusion of mental defilements have been removed by the lights of purifying awareness, and the glorious prosperity of nature renewed by treating the earth as a sacred garden of medicine (D. Crow, In Search of the Medicine Buddha).

16. There are minor differences in the way the precepts are formulated in the various Mahayana schools, which accounts for some discrepancies in their number. The principles underlying the precepts are, however, the same. Nowadays, the Bodhisattva precepts are usually reckoned as ten major and 48 minor precepts, while the Bhiksuni precepts are listed as 348.

17. In Asian popular belief, each person is born with two innate spirits, who record all his deeds – good and bad. In Buddhism, these spirits stand for the Alaya consciousness (see Glosssary), which follows a person from lifetime to lifetime.

18. On the significance of the number seven in Buddhism:

According to the Esoteric School, the number seven is the ultimate number in the cycle of Birth and Death. Therefore, in the bardo stage, [between reincarnations] the "soul" must undergo changes every seven days, and to be efficacious, mantras should be recited at least seven times ... Starting with the number seven and multiplying it by three or seven, we have twenty-one or forty-nine. Therefore, the Esoteric School teaches that mantras should be recited [at least] seven times to be effective, twenty-one or forty-nine times if the mind is weak and agitated (Thich Thien Tam, *Buddhism of Wisdom and Faith*,p.174).

19. How is it possible for a dying person *to recover immediately, upon reciting the Medicine Buddha's name*? It should be remembered that in Buddhism, everything is Mind-made, Mind-Only, including birth and death. Thus, in Zen literature, for example, truly accomplished Zen masters are always described as above birth and death, "returning to quiescence" at a time and place of their own choosing. Here, as everywhere else in this sutra, the key element is faith: the stronger one's faith, the deeper one's level of samadhi. One's power over the environment likewise increases, even to the point of turning death into life, not to mention curing disease!

The practice of lighting lamps and hanging banners is a skillful means designed to heighten the faith of the devout.

20. Please note the crucial combination of *self-help* (good roots and practice on the part of the cultivator) and *other-power* (the assistance of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas).

21. In Mahayana sutras, the word "parents" refers to all sentient beings, as throughout the eons of time in Samsara, all beings have been our fathers or mothers at one time or another. Thus, to be unfilial is to transgress against any sentient being (*Brahma Net Sutra*, Secondary Precept 20).

22. This passage shows that all karma, even the heaviest, can be dissipated through concentrating on the Medicine Buddha and cultivating merits and virtues. Thus, there is no disease or calamity that cannot be alleviated.

23. The vows of the Yaksa Generals to come to the assistance of all sentient beings derive from the virtues and power of the Medicine Buddha. They constitute another important means of curing disease and preventing calamities.

Please note that the number of Yaksa generals (12) multiplied by the size of their retinues (7,000 members each) equals 84,000 – the total number of Dharma methods employed by the Buddha to teach and convert sentient beings.

24. Lit., "strand of five colors". The ritual of "Knotting" the names of the Yaksa Generals consists of singlemindedly reciting the Medicine Buddha Dharani (Mantra) one or three times, followed by the name of a Yaksa general, while simultaneously tying one knot. This continues until all twelve names are recited and twelve knots are tied. Please note that this practice is a skillful expedient designed to deepen the faith of the devout.

See Master Hsuan Hua (*Medicine Master Sutra*, p. 173):

> A five-colored thread symbolizes the Five Directions (i.e., all directions), each of which has a demon associated with it. When the five-colored thread is tied into knots, it brings stability to insecure places.

गुल्मी, थानपति-२ निवासी वेदराज ज्ञवालीद्वारा
वाल्मीकि विद्यापीठ पुस्तकालयलाई
उपहार स्वरूप प्रदान।
२०६२।११।

Glossary

Alaya Consciousness. "All karma created in the present and previous lifetimes is stored in the Alaya Consciousness. This is regarded as that which undergoes the cycle of birth and death" (Sokk: 9).

"The concept of Alaya Vijnana (consciousness) constitutes the basis of the 'mind-only' doctrine of the Yogachara [school] and stands at the center of this school's theory of individualization, according to which past karmic seeds ... enter into the Alaya-Vijnana, whence they arise again to occasion thought activity. This individuated thinking is ridden with ignorance and egotism, which instigate the notion that it constitutes a real person in the real world" (Sham: 4).

Amitabha Buddha. Amitabha is the most commonly used name for the Buddha of Infinite Light and Infinite Life. A transhistorical Buddha venerated by all Mahayana schools (T'ien-T'ai, Esoteric, Zen ...) and, particularly, Pure Land. Presides over the Western Pure Land (Land of Ultimate Bliss) or Sukhavati, where anyone can be reborn through utterly sincere (i.e., singleminded) recitation of/meditation on his name.

"In the Pure Land schools of China and Japan, Amitabha is the intermediary between Supreme Reality and mankind, and faith in him ensures rebirth in his Paradise (Sukhavati). Symbolically, Amitabha is Higher Self (or Self-Nature)" (Humphrey: 30).

Amitabha Buddha at the higher or noumenon level represents the True Mind, the Self-Nature common to the Buddhas and sentient beings-- infinitely bright and everlasting. This deeper understanding

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Amitabha Buddha at the higher or noumenon level represents the True Mind, the Self-Nature common to the Buddhas and sentient beings-- infinitely bright and everlasting. This deeper understanding provides the rationale for the harmonization of Zen and Pure Land, two of the most popular schools of Mahayana Buddhism.

Ananda. "A cousin of the Buddha, the brother of Devadatta. One of the ten great disciples of the Buddha. Ananda accompanied the Buddha for more than twenty years and was the Master's favorite disciple. He attained Enlightenment after the demise of the Buddha under the guidance of Mahakasyapa. He was famed for his excellent memory and recited the Sutra-Pitaka (the sermons contained in the Tripitaka) at the First Buddhist Council" (Daito: 8).

Dharma. The word Dharma has several meanings: a) The teachings of the Buddhas (generally capitalized in English); b) law, doctrine; c) things, events, phenomena.

Dharma Semblance Age. The time following Buddha Sakyamuni's demise has been divided into three periods: i) the *Perfect Age of the Dharma*, lasting 500 years, when the Buddha's teaching was correctly practiced and Enlightenment often attained; ii) the *Dharma Semblance Age*, lasting about 1,000 years, when a form of the teaching was practiced but Enlightenment seldom attained; iii) the *Dharma-Ending Age*, lasting some 'ten thousand' years, when a diluted form of the teaching exists and Enlightenment is rarely attained.

Eight Precepts. "The eight precepts which a lay Buddhist should observe on *certain retreats*: (1) not killing living beings, (2) not stealing, (3) not having sexual intercourse, (4) not telling lies, (5) not drinking intoxicants, (6) not wearing bodily decoration, not using perfumes, not singing and dancing, and not going to see dances or plays, (7) not sleeping in a raised bed, and (8) not eating after noon" (Inagaki: 396-397).

Eight Types of Divinities. "These are various classes of non-human beings that are regarded as protectors of the Buddhist Dharma and often appear as part of the audience attending the Buddha's sermons. Strictly speaking, not all are celestials, but most of them inhabit the celestial or heavenly spheres of a world system. The eight classes, are: (1) gods (deva); (2) asuras; (3) the gandharvas and (4) the kinnaras; local spirits known as (5) yakshas (yaksa), sometimes associated with the Tushita Heaven, but usually located on the human plane; two kinds of mythical serpents, (6) the mahoragas and (7) the nagas; and (8) the celestial eagles known as the garudas." (Gomez: 289-290).

Eighty Auspicious Characteristics. "Bodily attributes of a Buddha, more subtle than the thirty-two auspicious signs. Examples: youthful complexion; a soft body; lips colored like a red, bright gourd; face like a full, clear moon; emitting fragrance from the pores and mouth; deportment as awesome as that of a lion; graceful and steady gait." (Chan: 495-496). See also "Thirty-two Marks of Greatness".

Evil Paths. see Three Evil Realms

Great Vehicle. see Mahayana

Karma. Action leading to future retribution *or reward,* in current or future lifetimes.

(I) *Collective karma*: the difference between personal and collective karma can be seen in the following example: Suppose a country goes to war to gain certain economic advantages and in the process, numerous soldiers and civilians are killed or maimed. If a particular citizen volunteers for military service and actually participates in the carnage, he commits a personal karma of killing. Other citizens, however, even if opposed to the war, may benefit directly or indirectly (e.g., through economic gain). They are thus said to share in the collective karma of killing by their country.

(II) *Fixed karma*: in principle, all karma is subject to change. Fixed karma, however, is karma which can be changed only in extraordinary circumstances, because it derives from an evil act committed simultaneously with mind, speech, and body. An example of fixed karma would be a premeditated crime (versus a crime of passion).

Lapis Lazuli. "Lapis lazuli is a deep blue gem-stone marked by sparkling golden crystals of iron pyrite, like the night sky awash with bright stars" (Birnbaum: 251).

Mahayana. "The *Great Vehicle*; one of the two major schools of Buddhism, the other being Theravada. Mahayana aims at bringing all sentient beings to Buddhahood. [Advanced] followers of Mahayana are called 'Bodhisattvas.' At the outset of their career, they make vows to save all beings, and in order to realize them, cultivate wisdom and accumulate merits. When their vows are fulfilled, they become Buddhas. Although historical evidence shows that Mahayana arose a few centuries after the Buddha's death...the essential part of the Mahayana teaching was revealed by the Buddha [during his lifetime to advanced practitioners]" (Inagaki: 407).

"Mahayana radically changed the conception of the adept: he no longer aspires to Nirvana but to the condition of a Buddha...two things are necessary for the Bodhisattva and his practice of wisdom: 'Never to abandon all beings, and to see into the truth that all things are empty'" (Eliade: 219).

Manjusri. "Manjusri, a famous Bodhisattva, is worshipped as the [personification of transcendental] Wisdom, and popularly depicted riding on a lion, the symbol of bravery. He generally holds a sword in his right hand, while in his left he has a lotus, on which a book [or sutra] is laid. His image is often seen in the second hall of the Buddhist monastery by the side of that of Sakyamuni Buddha" (Will: enc/264).

Medicine Buddha. "Buddha who heals the ills of body and spirit including that of ignorance; popular figure in early Mahayana Buddhism; reigns over the Pure Lapis Lazuli Paradise in the East" (Okazaki: 187).

Pratyeka-Buddha. "These Buddhas become fully enlightened ... by meditating on the principle of causality. Unlike the Perfect Buddhas, however, they do not exert themselves to teach others" (A. Buzo and T. Prince).

"In Buddhism, Pratyeka-buddhas generally mean those who live in a time when there is no Buddha but who awaken to the Truth through their own efforts" (Sokk: 344).

Precepts. "Rules of conduct and discipline established by the Buddha" (Yoko: 210). In addition to the Precepts, there are a number of regulations established either by the Buddha or, later on, by heads of Buddhist orders or major monasteries. The regulations are designed to clarify the rules or Precepts or their mode of application.

Sakyamuni Buddha. "Historical founder of Buddhism, Gautama Siddhartha, the Buddha Sakyamuni, who [lived] circa 581-501 B.C. as the first son of King Suddhodana, whose capital city of Kapilavastu was located in what is now Nepal. At the age of twenty-nine, he left his father's palace and his wife and child in search of the meaning of existence. One morning at the age of thirty-five, he realized Enlightenment while practicing meditation seated beneath the Bodhi tree. Thereafter, He spent the next forty-five years, until his death at the age of eighty, expounding his teachings ... in order that all sentient beings might realize the same Enlightenment that he had. Nowadays, the term 'a Buddha' denotes anyone who has realized Enlightenment, while 'the Buddha' refers to the historical Buddha, Sakyamuni. 'Buddhas,' naturally refers to all enlightened beings" (Yoko: 181).

Seven Treasures. Traditionally listed as: gold, silver, lapis lazuli, crystal, agate, red pearl and carnelian. They represent the seven powers of faith, perseverance, sense of shame, avoidance of wrongdoing, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom.

Sravaka. Literally, "hearer". Also translated as disciple. "Those who follow [the early teachings of the Buddha] and eventually become Arhats as a result of listening to the Buddhas and following their teachings" (T. Prince: 81).

"In Mahayana Buddhism [the term Sravaka] refers to a person in the Theravada school who exerts himself to attain the stage of

Arhat by observing 250 precepts in the case of monks and 348 in the case of nuns. This is a lower stage than that of Bodhisattva" (Yoko: 289).

"Originally a term for any practicing disciple of the Buddha (especially those who had adopted monastic vows), the word eventually came to refer in Mahayana literature to those who were 'mere disciples,' that is, those who did not seek to emulate the Buddha by taking the Bodhisattva's vows. In this sense, the word is often used in contrast to Bodhisattva ..." (Gomez).

Sumeru. Also called Polar Mountain. "A mountain thought to stand at the center of the world, according to ancient Indian tradition... The god Indra resides on the summit, while the Four Heavenly Kings live halfway down the four sides" (Sokk:. 412).

In Buddhist cosmology, the universe is composed of worlds upon worlds, *ad infinitum.* (Our earth is only an infinitesimal part of one of these countless worlds.) The Polar Mountain (Mount Sumeru) is the central mountain of each world.

Ten Grounds (Stages, Bhumi). "Ten Stages (or Ten Bhumi) through which the practitioner advances in Buddhist practice. In the system of the fifty-two (or fifty-three) levels of Bodhisattva practice, they are viewed as the forty-first through fiftieth levels" (Sokk: 439). In other words, the Ten Stages are among the highest levels achieved by Bodhisattvas before attaining Buddhahood.

Thirty-two Marks of Greatness (32 Auspicious Signs). "The major signs adorning the visible body of a Buddha or that of a universal monarch. Some examples are: a protuberance on the crown; a curling, white hair between the eyebrows; a golden complexion; a long, broad tongue; a halo ten feet in radius; an excellent voice" (Chan: 495). See also “Eighty Auspicious Characteristics”.

Three Evil Realms (Paths). "The three lower states of Samsara: hell-dweller, hungry ghost, and animal. To be born in a miserable state is the result of evil karma committed in a past life. When the retribution for that karma is completed, one will again be born in a higher state"(Chan: 479).

These paths can be taken as states of mind; i.e., when someone has a vicious thought of maiming or killing another, he is effectively reborn, *for that moment*, in the hells.

"Animals and hungry ghosts, heavens and hells (or paradises and purgatories) are metaphors for spiritual conditions and spiritual progress. They embody the *states of mind* whose pain and confusion motivate us to seek salvation, and the happiness and ease that foreshadow salvation" (Gomez/Land of Bliss: 30).

"According to Buddhist teachings, karmic results follow ineluctably upon the perpetration of acts, irrespective of conscious attitude or moral conscience (although the quality and force of the act may be significantly affected thereby). Thus beings in the lower states, animals for example, do indeed accumulate karma and must sooner or later experience the consequences of their actions, even though these may be performed under the irresistible influence of instinct. And the Karmic situation is compounded, rather than mitigated, by an unconsciousness of the Dharma. The strength of instinctual habit and the ignorance of what behavior is to be adopted and what behavior is to be abandoned constitutes one of the principal miseries of existence in states other than that of the precious human condition" (Shantideva: 108).

Three Root Precepts (Three Bodies of Pure Precepts). Three groups of precepts which form the basis of all Bodhisattva practice: (1) Do not what is evil, (2) Do what is good and (3) Be of benefit to all sentient beings.

The Mahayana Three Root Precepts are similar to a formulation in the Pali Canon, except for the last clause which reads in the latter, "Keep the mind pure." The difference highlights the altruistic emphasis of Mahayana Buddhism.

All sets of precepts, including the Bodhisattva precepts, are derived from the Three Bodies of Pure Precepts, the root precepts in Buddhism. These precepts may in principle be administered to Buddhists in lieu of the full set of Bodhisattva precepts described in the *Brahma Net Sutra*.

Triple Jewel. "In Buddhism, there are three fundamental aspects -- known as the Three Jewels (triratna) because of their preciousness -- which form a basis for belief and practice. The first Jewel is the Buddha, who, after years of searching found the path to Enlightenment and subsequently taught it to others. The second is the Dharma, the teaching or the truth about the way things are. The last one is the Sangha, the community of monks, nuns, and laypeople who practice and help others to practice the teaching..." (Clarke:151).

Wheel-turning King. "In the Indian mythological history of the world, a universal monarch occasionally appears who is supposed to be a most powerful and meritorious king capable of ruling the entire world" (Chan: 485).

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Three Root Precepts (Three Bodies of Pure Precepts). Three groups of precepts which form the basis of all Bodhisattva practice: (1) Do not what is evil, (2) Do what is good and (3) Be of benefit to all sentient beings.

The Mahayana Three Root Precepts are similar to a formulation in the Pali Canon, except for the last clause which reads in the latter, "Keep the mind pure." The difference highlights the altruistic emphasis of Mahayana Buddhism.

All sets of precepts, including the Bodhisattva precepts, are derived from the Three Bodies of Pure Precepts, the root precepts in Buddhism. These precepts may in principle be administered to Buddhists in lieu of the full set of Bodhisattva precepts described in the *Brahma Net Sutra.*

Triple Jewel. "In Buddhism, there are three fundamental aspects -- known as the Three Jewels (triratna) because of their preciousness -- which form a basis for belief and practice. The first Jewel is the Buddha, who, after years of searching found the path to Enlightenment and subsequently taught it to others. The second is the Dharma, the teaching or the truth about the way things are. The last one is the Sangha, the community of monks, nuns, and laypeople who practice and help others to practice the teaching..." (Clarke:151).

Wheel-turning King. "In the Indian mythological history of the world, a universal monarch occasionally appears who is supposed to be a most powerful and meritorious king capable of ruling the entire world" (Chan: 485).

D.T. Suzuki, *Manual of Zen Buddhism* (p. 161):

Yakushi (the Medicine Buddha) is the Bodhisattva-doctor. He holds a medicine jar in his hand and is attended by twelve gods each of whom represents one of his twelve vows. The main object of his appearance among us is to cure us of ignorance, which is the most fundamental of all the ills the flesh is heir to.

***

DEDICATION OF MERIT

May the merit and virtues
accrued from this work,
Adorn Amitabha Buddha's Pure Land,
Repaying the four kinds
of kindness above,
and relieving the sufferings of
those on the Three Paths below.

May those who see and hear of this,
And all sentient beings in the Dharma Realm,
Develop the Bodhi Mind,
And live the Teachings for
the rest of this life,
Then be born together in
The Land of Ultimate Bliss.
Homage to Amitabha Buddha!

"Wherever the Buddha's teachings have flourished,
either in cities or countrysides,
people would gain inconceivable benefits.
The land and pepole would be enveloped in peace.
The sun and moon will shine clear and bright.
Wind and rain would appear accordingly,
and there will be no disasters.
Nations would be prosperous
and there would be no use for soldiers or weapons.
People would abide by morality and accord with laws.
They would be courteous and humble,
and everyone would be content without injustices.
There would be no thefts or violence.
The strong would not dominate the weak
and everyone would get their fair share."

THE BUDDHA SPEAKS OF
THE INFINITE LIFE SUTRA OF
ADORNMENT, PURITY, EQUALITY
AND ENLIGHTENMENT OF
THE MAHAYANA SCHOOL

DEDICATION OF MERIT

May the merit and virtue
accrued from this work
adorn Amitabha Buddha's Pure Land,
repay the four great kindnesses above,
and relieve the suffering of
those on the three paths below.

May those who see or hear of these efforts
generate Bodhi-mind,
spend their lives devoted to the Buddha Dharma,
and finally be reborn together in
the Land of Ultimate Bliss.
Homage to Amita Buddha!

NAMO AMITABHA
南無阿彌陀佛

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we request that it be treated with respect.
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please pass it on to others or
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Thanks for your co-operation.
Namo Amitabha!

बौ.द.

正法久住

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